



Syria – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 5 August 2015

Recent media information on ISIL/Daash activity in Syria.

A New York Times states:

“The Islamic State, also known as ISIS, ISIL and Daesh, initially functioned solely as a terrorist organization, if one more coldblooded even than Al Qaeda. Then it went on to seize land. That distinction is proving to be more than a matter of perspective for those who live under the Islamic State, which has provided relative stability in a region troubled by war and chaos while filling a vacuum left by failing and corrupt governments that also employed violence — arrest, torture and detention. While no one is predicting that the Islamic State will become the steward of an accountable, functioning state anytime soon, the group is putting in place the kinds of measures associated with governing: issuing identification cards for residents, promulgating fishing guidelines to preserve stocks, requiring that cars carry tool kits for emergencies. That transition may demand that the West rethink its military-first approach to combating the group.” (New York Times (21 July 2015) *ISIS Transforming Into Functioning State That Uses Terror as Tool*)

A Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty report states:

“A monitoring group says an attack by Islamic State fighters on the Syrian town of Kobani and a nearby village has so far killed at least 146 civilians -- the second-biggest massacre by the radical group in the country. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said on June 26 that it was the largest single massacre of civilians by Islamic State since the killing of hundreds of members of the Sunni Muslim Sheitaat tribe in eastern Syria last year.” (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (26 June 2015) *Monitor: IS Attack On Syria's Kobani Kills 146*)

In a report on events up to the end of June 2015 the UK-based *Syrian Observatory for Human Rights* states:

“SOHR documented executing of 3027 civilians, rebels, members of the regime forces and allied militiamen and IS members, they were executed by IS in its-held areas in Syria since the declaration of its alleged “caliphate” in 6/29/2014 until 6/28/2015. It executed 1787 civilians, including 74 children and 86 women, by shooting, beheading, stoning, throwing off high place and burning in the provinces of Damascus, Rif Dimashq, Deir Ezzor, al- Raqqa, al- Hasakah, Aleppo, Hama and Hama. They executed more than 930 Arab Sunni civilians of al- Shaitat tribe’s people in the eastern countryside of Deir Ezzor, 223 Kurdish citizens by shooting them and by bladed weapons in the city of Ayn al- Arab and village of Barkh Botan and 46 civilians by burning and beheading in the village of al- Mab’ojah inhabited by people of Alawi, Ismaeili and Sunni sects in the east of the city of Salamiyyah.” (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (28 June 2015) *Islamic State; a year of caliphate, ruling 50% of Syria, seizing the Syrian people resources, blatant violations of human rights and massacres against all its components*)

A report from the *UN News Service* states:

“An estimated 8 million people live under ISIL territory in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. ‘The brutal nature and overall scale of abuses appears to be intended to reinforce the group’s absolute monopoly on political and social life and to enforce compliance and conformity among communities under its control. The result is that civilians who remain in ISIL-controlled areas live in a state of constant and almost unimaginable fear,’ said Emmerson in his report, which was presented to the Human Rights Council last month. ISIL has targeted religious and ethnic groups in Iraq and Syria and committed acts of violence against civilians because of their affiliation with them. These communities have been forced to assimilate, flee or face death, he explained. ‘In Iraq, violence against the Yezidis have been reported with men being separated from women and children, then taken to ditches and brutally executed,’ he added. Extremely vulnerable to violence and discrimination, women face sexual and gender-based violence, including sexual slavery, killings, enslavement, and rape. They are confined to their homes and forced to adhere to a strict dress code, pointed out the expert. And children as young as six have been raped, tortured and kidnapped.” (UN News Service (31 July 2015) *In ISIL-controlled territory, 8 million civilians living in ‘state of fear’ – UN expert*)

A *Human Rights Watch* report states:

“Armed militants believed to be members of Islamic State, also known as ISIS, deliberately targeted people they knew were civilians in a June 25, 2015, attack in and around the northern Syrian city of Kobani. Syrian Kurdish authorities and local human rights groups said that 233 to 262 civilians were killed and at least 273 wounded. Fifteen witnesses, including eight of the wounded, described to Human Rights Watch the deliberate killing of civilians by attackers whom local authorities and residents identified as ISIS. The witnesses said that to dupe civilians and gain their confidence, the attackers wore uniforms resembling those of the groups that have been battling ISIS in Kobani, ‘Ayn al-`Arab in Arabic. The attackers killed civilians with weapons that included assault rifles, machineguns, and in some cases knives and grenades, witnesses and local authorities said.” (Human Rights Watch (3 July 2015) *Syria: Deliberate Killing of Civilians by ISIS*)

A *Voice of America News* report states:

“Islamic State militants have released a video showing 25 men being executed by what appear to be teenagers in an ancient amphitheater in the Syrian city of Palmyra. The video, uploaded to social media Saturday, purports to show IS militants leading a group of what are said to be Syrian government soldiers from the notorious Palmyra prison to the amphitheater, where they are then shot. Stills from the video showed the killers to be young males — some as young as 13 or 14 — wearing desert camouflage and brown bandannas. IS has reportedly carried out more than 200 executions in and around Palmyra since it captured the city in May.” (Voice of America News (4 July 2015) *IS Video Shows Mass Execution in Syria's Palmyra*)

An *Agence France Presse* report states:

“At least 18 people were killed Thursday when Islamic State group jihadists attacked a town in northern Syria recently captured by Kurdish forces, a monitor said. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitor said several IS fighters infiltrated Sarrin, in Aleppo province, and attacked a school being used as a base by the Kurds. A first attacker blew himself up with the rest then opening fire, the Britain-based monitor said. At least 10 Kurdish fighters were killed in the blast and subsequent gun battle, along with eight IS members, including the bomber, the Observatory said.” (Agence France Presse (30 July 2015) *18 dead in IS attack on Kurd-held Syria town: monitor*)

An article from *The Economist* states:

“Inside a dimly-lit school in the Syrian town of Amuda, a Kurdish family tells of their flight from the self-styled caliphate of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. They came from Raqqa, the city in north-eastern Syria that Islamic State (IS) has designated as its capital. The family is seeking refuge in an enclave that Kurdish fighters have carved from a disintegrating corner of Syria. They decided to flee Raqqa in June, when IS began forcing hundreds of Kurds from their homes. The expulsion was prompted by the gains that have recently been made by Kurdish fighters, including their retaking of the strategic border town of Tel Abyad, 200 km (120 miles) to the west. Their military successes led IS to accuse the Kurdish civilians living in their capital of collecting information for a Kurdish militia, the People’s Defence Units (YPG) that has mounted the most successful opposition to IS in Syria.” (The Economist (3 August 2015) *Islamic State turns on its Kurds*)

A report published by the *Syrian Observatory for Human Rights* refers to the recruitment of children by Islamic State as follows:

“In addition to, the past seven months witnessed organized recruitment carried out by ‘Islamic State’ for children under 16 years old, where they were enrolled in the training camps of ‘cubs of the caliphate’, first they have undergone ‘Sharia courses’ focusing on brainwashes and linking the children’s destiny with the destiny of ‘Islamic State’, and that ‘cubs of caliphate’ are the once who are going to be depended on in spreading ‘caliphate’ all over the world, and that those cubs are going to conquer Rome. Meanwhile, the military branch of recruiting Syrian children trained them on military and fighting operations, reaching to preparing them for suicide bombs, where at 89 fighter children of ‘cubs of caliphate’ were killed out of 1100 children, where SOHR documented that more than 1100 children joined the so-called ‘cubs of the caliphate’ since the beginning of this year and involved them for the first time in fighting in the city of Ayna al- Arab (Kobani) in January 25. Out of the 89 children there were at least 19 children blew themselves up using booby-trapped vehicles, last of them were the four children who blew themselves up on the outskirts of the city of al- Hasakah within the military operation launched by IS against YPG in July 6, in the areas expanding from the vicinity of Jabal Abdul Aziz in the south of al- Hasakah to the vicinity of Serrin town in the south of Kobani passing through the north of al- Raqqa city. IS also made ‘cubs of caliphate personnel’ participate executions against its victims. In early January, SOHR documented the first declared execution carried out by children, where 2 children executed 2 IS members confessed of being ‘agents for the Russian intelligence’. Another cub also beheaded a captain in the regime forces. In late March, SOHR document participation of 9 children in an execution operation carried out by IS members, who are under the age of 18, in the province of Hama, where the children carried automatic rifles dragging 9 men and kneeling them on the ground, then one of the ‘cubs of caliphate’ distributed knives on the 9 children who

beheaded the 9 men. In addition to, 25 members of 'cubs of caliphate' executed 25 soldiers of the regime forces on the Roman theater of Palmyra east of Homs in May 27." (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (4 August 2015) *After the failure of the international community to protect them, the Syrian children are between "Cubs of the caliphate" and "Cubs of National Defense"*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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